

OCTOBER 2009

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START Heart Healthy EARLY

By Elizabeth Smoots, MD, FAAFP

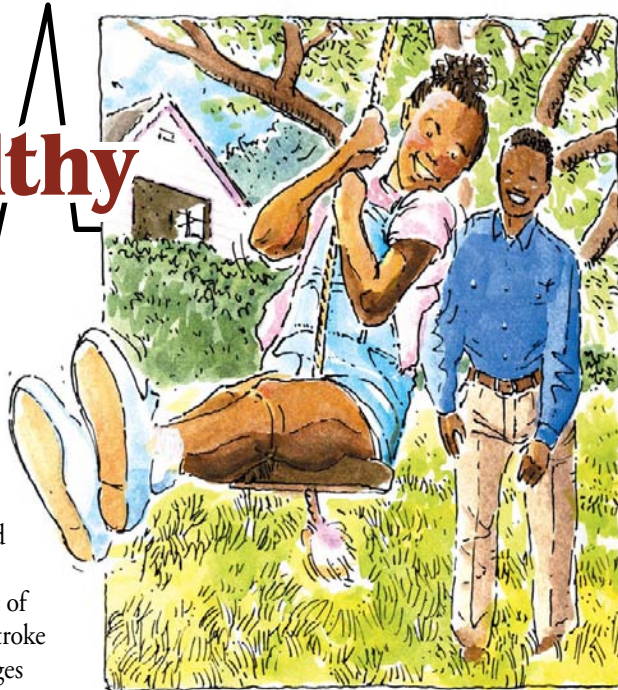
Children's lives have changed a lot in the past 25 years. Compared to previous generations, today's kids spend more time with computers and video games, get less exercise, and consume larger amounts of high-calorie beverages and fast foods.

All of these habits can hasten the onset of heart disease, according to the Heart and Stroke Foundation (HSF). Many Canadian kids ages 9-12 have lifestyle habits that may increase their risk for developing heart disease by their 30s. More than 1/3 of children ages 2-11 are overweight – an estimated half are obese. More than half of 5- to 17-year olds don't get enough physical activity for good health.

Fortunately, parents can take steps to help prevent early cardiovascular disease from developing in their children. Here's what the HSF recommends for raising heart-healthy kids:

Encourage fun physical activity.

Children and teens need at least 90 minutes of physical activity a day, most days of the week. Kid-oriented favourites include biking, playing outdoors, hockey, skating, soccer and other sports, especially with other kids.



Remember to limit use of TVs, computers, cell phones and video games in the home to less than 2 hours a day; these sedentary activities contribute to weight gain.

Begin life-long healthy eating habits.

Kids benefit from eating fruits and vegetables every day; even if your child is a finicky eater, keep offering a healthful variety. Also essential are whole grains, legumes, lean meats and low fat dairy products.

Finally, limit processed snack foods that are high in trans fat, saturated fat, sugar, salt and calories. Replace sugary beverages with water and low fat milk.

HEALTH notes

■ **Make trick-or-treaters smile this year** without loading them up on candy. When ghosts and monsters come knocking, give them healthy snacks such as individual packages of popcorn, sugar-free gum or baked chips. Little ghouls also enjoy small novelties such as bubble fluid, key chains or festive toy figures. Halloween flashing pins, mini flashlights or glow sticks can provide added safety for your spooky visitors as they're going door to door. Another benefit of skipping the candy – you won't be left "goblin" the leftovers.

■ **Watch out for cyber scams.** Scammers are taking advantage of the current economic situation to tempt people with everything from opportunities to make easy money from home to a share in an overseas family fortune. If you find yourself considering an offer you received via email or online ad, you risk losing your money or becoming an identity theft victim. Never give out personal information to a stranger or a company by email or on websites. Be careful.

■ **Economic uncertainty can strain your mental health.** The incidence of depression, anxiety and addictions tends to rise during distressing times. If you're experiencing sadness or apathy, excessive anxiety or anger, poor sleep or difficulty concentrating or doing regular things, talk to your health care provider, employee assistance program, or clergy. Get help immediately if you have thoughts of suicide. You don't have to go it alone.

OCTOBER GOAL BLOG BLOG BLOG BLOG BLOG BLOG BLOG BLOG

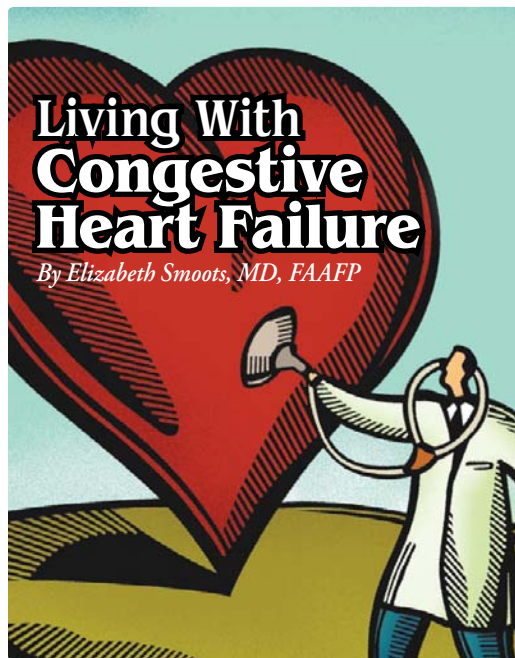
Looking for tobacco-cessation support online? Try "quitting" blogs, which may provide helpful, fresh ideas and success stories.

*Have a Safe and
Healthy Thanksgiving!*

Safety After Dark

Night time is when we are most likely to become victims of random crime – offenders use the cloak of darkness to hide. When making your way at night, arm yourself with these street-smart tips:

- Don't put yourself in danger – always stay aware of potentially risky situations and avoid them!
- Don't walk alone.
- Avoid isolated areas, such as parking lots and deserted streets or parks.
- Wait for public transportation in well-populated, well-lit areas; on the bus, sit near the driver.
- When a cab drops you off, ask the driver to wait until you are safely inside.
- Have keys ready to open your car or front door as you approach.
- Put away your headset and cell phone or ear buds – such distractions can make you more vulnerable to an attacker.
- Carry a personal safety device, such as a whistle, personal alarm, heavy-duty flashlight, or pepper spray (check your state law).
- Learn basic self-defence that can help you get away, defend yourself and avoid risky situations.
- If attacked, scream and yell, "Call 911 – someone is being attacked!" People often don't respond to "Help!"



An estimated 400,000 Canadians have congestive heart failure (CHF). Risk increases with age and occurs when the heart fails to pump properly. As a result, oxygen and nutrient flow is impaired and fluid can accumulate in your legs or your lungs.

A key sign of CHF is shortness of breath during physical activities or while lying down. Other symptoms include coughing, confusion, fatigue, sudden weight gain, and swelling of the ankles or legs.

A detailed medical exam can reveal whether a person has CHF. The evaluation may search for

Memory Busters

There are many conditions created by daily living that contribute to forgetfulness, such as:

Mental overload – If you are overwhelmed with details and tasks, you will probably have memory problems. After all, the more you have to learn and do, the more you have to forget.

Stress – The distraction of feeling stressed and worried can interfere with learning and retention (memory).

Depression and anxiety – Poor mental health can alter brain chemistry in ways that hinder thinking and memory.

Memory Boosters

Don't forget these helpful tips:

Stay mentally active. Engage in activities that tax your concentration and memory, such as crossword

possible causes of the condition such as coronary artery disease, prior heart attack, high blood pressure or thyroid disorders.

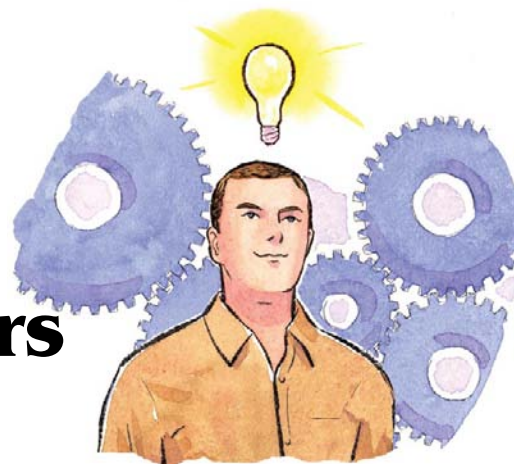
Medications and lifestyle changes can help control CHF symptoms. Here are 3 essential habits to help you preserve your health:

Exercise regularly. Plan a program of gradually increasing physical activity under your provider's supervision. Exercise can help your heart pump more efficiently and improve your endurance.

Eat nutritiously. Consume a low fat diet containing lots of fruits and vegetables. Strictly limit or avoid alcohol, which interferes with the heart's ability to pump blood. Lose weight if you're overweight. And cut back on salt.

Educate yourself. Work closely with your provider to learn about your condition. Ask about the ins and outs of your medications and what side effects to report. Get help managing contributing conditions such as stress, nicotine addiction, diabetes, excess weight, high blood pressure and unhealthy cholesterol.

And remember that a healthier heart and better quality of life usually go hand in hand.



puzzles, learning new ideas and reading. Take a course in memory improvement.

Learn to be observant and listen well. For example, notice your surroundings when driving to a new location or parking your car; when introduced to a new person, repeat the person's name.

Get organized. Use portable calendars and planners; make lists and follow them, or leave notes where you're sure to see them. Establish fixed places to keep things like keys and glasses.

Slow down! Give yourself time to think and absorb information.

And finally, there's nothing like a quality night's sleep to improve your mind, your memory and your mood.

Best Calorie Burners?

When you're ready, exercise longer, turn up the heat, or both.

If you're like many Canadians, you probably struggle to fit exercise into your busy schedule. So when you commit to exercising, you want to get the most from it – burning calories, losing weight and improved fitness.

Fitness experts recommend **aerobic exercise** for all 3 of these goals. Aerobic activities elevate your heart rate through **moderate** or **vigorous intensity** – the difference is based on your fitness level, or what feels comfortable, to avoid strain or injury.

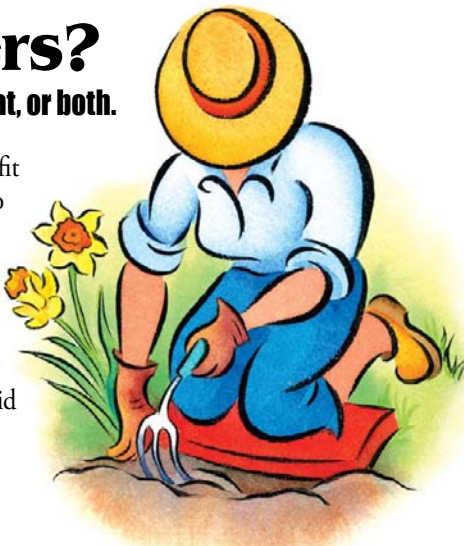
Moderate-intensity aerobic activity will produce a little sweat, but not leave you breathless or unable to converse. Minimum total time: 30-60 minutes, 5 days a week. *Examples:* brisk walking, water aerobics, biking and ballroom dancing.

Vigorous-intensity aerobic activity causes rapid breathing and substantially increases heart rate. Minimum total time: 20-30 minutes, 3 days a week. *Examples:* jogging, race walking, running, hiking uphill, racquetball or aerobic machine workouts.

Guidelines: If time is short, you can accumulate 30-60 moderate minutes in 3-6 10-minute bouts during your day, or 20-30 vigorous minutes in 2-3 10-minute bouts. However, longer periods are best for improving cardiac fitness. And to lose weight and keep it off, you need to progress gradually to 60-90 minutes most days of the week.

Like variety? Great – you can combine moderate and vigorous intensity. For example, walk briskly for 30 minutes twice a week and jog or use a treadmill at higher intensity on 2 other days.

The chart at right provides an estimate of calories burned during various activities for various weights and shows how the length of time and intensity can impact your results.



Calories burned for time listed below:

| 120 lbs/ 54 kg | 140 lbs/ 64 kg | 160 lbs/ 73 kg | 180 lbs/ 82 kg | 200 lbs/ 91 kg |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Bicycling, 10 min | | | | |
| 70 | 80 | 90 | 100 | 120 |
| Bicycling (stationary), moderate, 30 min | | | | |
| 180 | 210 | 240 | 270 | 300 |
| Dancing, 20 min | | | | |
| 80 | 80 | 100 | 120 | 120 |
| Gardening, 60 min | | | | |
| 240 | 300 | 360 | 360 | 420 |
| Swimming slow crawl, 30 min | | | | |
| 210 | 240 | 270 | 300 | 360 |
| Swimming fast, 20 min | | | | |
| 180 | 220 | 260 | 280 | 320 |
| Walking 2 mph/3.2 km/h, 30 min | | | | |
| 60 | 60 | 90 | 90 | 90 |
| Walking 4 mph/6.4 km/h, 60 min | | | | |
| 240 | 240 | 300 | 360 | 360 |

Note: Don't overdo it if you're a beginner. Consult your provider before starting or increasing exercise if you are inactive or have a chronic condition.

Q: Do I need a hearing aid?

By: Elizabeth Smoots, MD, FAAFP

A: We live in a world full of noise, so it's no wonder we are losing our hearing more than ever and at earlier ages. While most ear problems occur after age 60, the increasing rate among young people is mainly a result of living in a modern noisy environment. Even children and teens are not exempt from premature hearing loss.

You could have hearing loss if you frequently notice these signs: • sounds seem distorted or muffled • difficulty understanding speech • need for people to repeat themselves •

trouble hearing over the phone • difficulty hearing in a noisy background • raising TV or radio volume so high that others complain.

If you suspect you may have hearing loss, see your provider for an evaluation to rule out correctable causes and to schedule a hearing test if necessary. The good news is that a variety of treatment options, including hearing aids and medical or surgical procedures, are available to help no matter what your age.

MIND YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

Singing the Winter Blues

Do you ever feel so low during winter that you want to hibernate? Are these feelings more pronounced during the winter? For many people, this could indicate symptoms of seasonal affective disorder (SAD).

People with SAD may find they:

- Sleep more, eat more and withdraw from social activities.
- Have anxiety, irritability, headache and cravings for sweet, starchy foods.
- Gain weight due to over eating or lack of physical activity during winter.

SAD is a form of depression linked to decreased daylight during the winter months. Natural daylight is many times brighter than indoor light. If you spend much of your winter indoors exposed only to artificial light, your brain knows the difference – and may trigger mood changes. SAD symptoms recede during spring and summer when days are longer and sunnier.

Scientists believe that SAD may be triggered by abnormal levels of *serotonin* and other neurotransmitters in the brain related to appetite, sleep, mood and body temperature – all of which appear to be disrupted in SAD patients.

If you have symptoms, consult your provider, who will want to rule out other causes of your depression. You may be diagnosed with SAD if you have had 3 consecutive winters of depression followed by a significant remission of symptoms in spring and summer.

SAD Relief

Light therapy, or phototherapy, stimulates the brain to produce neurotransmitters. You sit a few feet away from a special light box for about 45 minutes a day. This light is stronger than ordinary office or household lighting. If light therapy works, your symptoms will improve significantly or disappear altogether.

Daily walking in daylight for 30-60 minutes several days a week may reduce depression. The fresh air, natural light and vigorous motion should boost your energy and mood; it may also help control food cravings that contribute to added pounds in the winter.

Keep those questions and suggestions coming!

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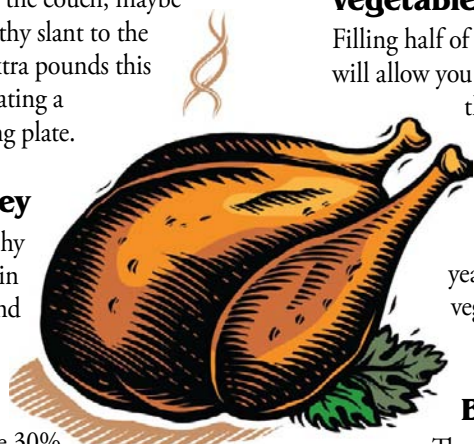
Healthy Thanksgiving

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

If your Thanksgiving tradition dictates that you'll overeat at dinner, have 2 desserts and then fall asleep on the couch, maybe it's time to add a healthy slant to the festive meal. Avoid extra pounds this holiday season by creating a balanced Thanksgiving plate.

Let's talk turkey

Turkey is a very healthy option since it is low in fat, high in protein and a good source of muscle-building minerals such as zinc and selenium. To save 30% of the fat and calories, choose skinless white turkey meat instead of dark meat with skin. Fill about one-third of your plate with turkey (75 grams or the size of a deck of cards).



Calorie-wise carbs

Instead of filling up on buttery mashed potatoes, opt for roasted root vegetables this year. A mix of sweet potatoes, squash and potatoes will provide more vitamin A and eliminate about 10 grams of artery-clogging fat. Design one-third of your plate with these starchy carbohydrates (about 1 cup/250 ml or the size of a baseball). If you can't resist mashed potatoes, choose them instead of root vegetables, but reduce the serving size to 1 half-cup/125 ml.

A variety of vegetables

Filling half of your plate with vegetables will allow you to eat a large volume of food that's filled with essential vitamins such as A, C, K and folate. Plus, the fibre in vegetables is magical – it helps make you feel full (you won't have room for 2 desserts this year!), but is low in calories. Choose vegetables that are not smothered in creamy sauce, cheese or butter.



Better beverages

The calories in beverages add up quickly, with about 100 calories per 1 cup/250 ml of pop, juice or beer. If you know you'll crave a second helping of your favourite food, exclude calorie-containing beverages and opt for calorie-free sparkling or plain water instead.



Don't deny dessert

There's still room for your favourite dessert; just watch the portion size. The first few bites of food provide the most sensory pleasure, so a small serving is often enough to satisfy the appetite!

Recipe of the Month

Raspberry Crumble

- 4 cups/250ml fresh or frozen raspberries
- 1 tbsp/15ml flour
- 1 tbsp/15ml orange juice



Crumb topping:

- ½ cup/125ml uncooked quick-cooking oats
- ¼ cup/50ml sugar
- 2 tbsp/25ml flour
- ¼ cup/50ml light non-hydrogenated soft margarine

- 1 Preheat oven to 400°F/200°C. Gently mix berries with flour, sugar and juice. Pour into glass baking dish sprayed with cooking spray.
- 2 In a bowl, combine oats, flour and sugar. Using 2 knives, cut margarine into oat mixture to a coarse texture with pea-size pieces.
- 3 Drop mixture evenly over berries.
- 4 Bake 20-25 minutes or until berries are bubbling and topping is golden.

Nutrition Facts

MAKES 6 SERVINGS

| Amount Per Serving | Calories | 275 |
|--------------------|--------------|------|
| | Protein | 2.5g |
| | Total Fat | 4g |
| | Carbohydrate | 60g |
| | Fibre | 8g |
| | Sodium | 62mg |

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Editor's Note: We are pleased to introduce Cara Rosenbloom, a Registered Dietitian in Toronto – the latest addition to our Canadian Advisory Board, which reviews Body Bulletin. Look for her articles on this page 6 times a year. You can learn more about Cara at <http://wordstoatby.ca/index.html>.